

**AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**  
**September 9, 2010**  
**Bangs Community Center: Large Activity Room**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Doris Holden (out-going member), Rosemary Kofler, Kathy Koplow, Mary Jane Laus, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo

**Absent:** Jack Wollensak

**Select Board Liaison:** Stephanie O'Keeffe absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:** Larry Shaffer (Town Manager), John Musante (Finance Director), Kay Zlogar, Alan Root, Sue Dierks, Richard Kofler, Scott Merzbach (Gazette Reporter)

**Welcome:** Dan Clapp, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The minutes of the July 8, 2010 meeting were approved and accepted.

**Friends' Treasurer Report:**

**Doris** provided a handout showing \$13,946.79 in the checking account and \$71,799.62 in the investment account.

**Karen** reported contributions to the Friends for FY10 were \$16,634.21. Thus far in FY11 the Friends received \$425.00. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

**Conversation with Larry Shaffer:**

**Dan** announced that today would be Larry Shaffer's last meeting with the COA. He is retiring effective September 30.

**Larry** thanked Dan and members of the COA for accommodating him so kindly over the past few months. He noted with great pleasure the accomplishments achieved and made possible by our input, assistance and cooperation. Larry is pleased with the immediate changes that benefit all users of Bangs – the electronic message board, the new wide-screen TV, the new chairs and the arrangement of utilization of the second floor to lease to non-profit groups. He is encouraged by the collaboration of the Senior Center and the Health Department with the merging of clerical function.

**Dan** thanked Larry for his willingness to listen, share and respond to our suggestions.

**Joel made a motion that the COA formally thank Larry Shaffer for his willingness to be with us to discuss the affairs of the Bangs Center and the Senior Center over the past months.**

The COA members unanimously supported the motion.

The Select Board has proposed appointing John Musante as Town Manager.

**John Musante** spoke. He intends to work very closely with the COA and other human service agencies in the Town. "The needs of the seniors are many and they are growing. You documented that quite well with the work you've done on the Council with the survey." Larry has had an emphasis on working with our departments to get them to work more closely together and identify partnerships. That general thrust is a sound one given our growing needs with the senior population. With funding we expect at least one more difficult year. The federal stimulus dollars helped but they will be disappearing next July. At their last meeting the Select Board voted to amend our senior property tax work-off program. That will help 30 seniors this year to earn up to a \$1000 abatement off their property tax bill.

**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

**Friends:**

**Doris** reported. The Friends Board met on July 14 to discuss the Market America fundraising proposal set forth by Bill Shontz at the July COA meeting. It would involve more than the Friends were willing to undertake, may involve the Senior Center staff and would require a continuing level of purchases – all inappropriate for the Friends. They turned down the proposal and thanked Bill Shontz for his time.

The Friends will meet on Monday, September 13 at 1:00 PM to discuss other fundraising possibilities, including the Second Annual Amherst Follies.

#### **Alan Root-Generated Survey:**

**Joel** reported. The subcommittee has not yet approved the changes to the draft document (handout) for insertion into the October newsletter. Nancy said it should be clear that Alan Root and many other seniors are conducting the survey. The COA did not generate it.

**Alan** stressed that this is not a 'survey' but a 'questionnaire'. He suggested it be called a 'Future Plan' rather than a '5-Year Plan'.

**A motion was made to assign the sub-committee to prepare the final presentation of the questionnaire for insertion in the newsletter.** It was unanimously approved.

#### **Landscaping Work Update:**

**Nancy** said the project has passed through a number of Town Boards and committees successfully and is expected to be completed before the snow flies. Ron Bohonowicz was praised for his willingness to listen and incorporate suggestions by seniors.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE**

#### **Ad Hoc Survey:**

**Rosemary** reported. Additions of an Introductory Letter and Key Points have been added to the 2010 Survey on the Town website.

Randall Stokes gave a Power point presentation to the Select Board on July 26.

Mary Jane is looking into putting that presentation on ACTV. The committee will meet today to discuss a presentation at Town Meeting on November 8.

#### **SHAG (Senior Health Advisory Group):**

Shirley Packard, a member of SHAG, has been arranging for health care professionals to give health seminars at Bangs for the past few years. She will no longer be doing that and has asked the SHAG committee if they would take on the project.

#### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

There were no meetings in July or August. **Joan** reported that Director, Robert Gallant, is retiring.

#### **Changes Sub-Committee:**

Although room changes within Bangs are not currently under consideration, there is concern about improving the appearance of some of the meeting rooms. Nancy said that department heads are looking at paint colors for our rooms to get away from the stark white we have now. We also have new chairs. The electronic bulletin boards are new. Karen has worked hard to create appealing and attractive formats to present the information.

#### **COA Nominating Committee Update:**

**Dan** reported. Recommendations were made to Town Manager. He has appointed Jack Wollensak and re-appointed Rosemary Kofler to the COA. Doris has completed two full three-year terms. Nancy and all members thanked Doris for her dedicated service. Nancy said there would always be a seat at the table for her.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Maura:**

College students are back. Maura met with **Wendy Ewald** who teaches the Collaborative Art course at Amherst College and who created the 'Bank of Exchanges' with her students. Two seniors have enrolled in her course. The goal is to get students to work with other elders.

**Lisa Raskin**, who teaches the Psychology of Aging at Amherst College, has about 20 students in her class. They all get matched up with a senior for friendly visiting.

Student **Bessie Young** will return to AC this year. She received a \$10,000 grant to visit other countries this summer in order to interview and photograph seniors. Dan suggested that Bessie present a program on her experience to our seniors.

**Nancy:**

There will be a fundraising Jazz Fest at the Alumni House at Amherst College on October 21 at 6:30 PM.

**Sara Wolf** will be the Keynote speaker at the *Annual Volunteer Awards Social* on October 21 at 2:00 PM. There are several new programs starting at the Senior Center. The Yoga program got a huge response. There is a problem in finding enough space for our programs.

Nancy and Maura, with Karen's assistance, completed their report (handout) for the State Report for the Office of Elder Affairs. It was a huge undertaking and full of valuable information. There are some changes from last year. We have fewer volunteers but those who do volunteer are giving more time. "In-Kind" goods and services have gone down. Maura said the amount of food we get from local stores for our Wednesday Bread and Produce Program has decreased dramatically. The stores are using their day-old products 'in house' now.

Nancy spoke of the wide use of the Convalescent Loan equipment. People have donated almost \$6000 worth of equipment this year - equipment that is loaned out at no cost to seniors in need. It is a big demand on staff time, but the service is invaluable to our seniors.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on October 14, 2010 at 9:00 AM at the Bangs Community Center.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the July 8, 2010 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.

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**Document List**

The following documents were made available to all members of the COA during the meeting. They are available for review at the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, MA.

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Minutes of July 8, 2010 Meeting
3. List of FY 2011 Members of the Amherst COA
4. Friends of the Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report
5. Draft copy of Amherst Senior Center 5-Year Plan
6. FY2010 Annual Report – State Executive Office of Elder Affairs
7. MCOA Fall Conference Highlights and Information
8. Open Meeting Law Guide
9. Amherst Senior Health Services Log of Activities
10. *The American Nurse* article reprint: "Nurse-managed health center is valuable resource for MA seniors"